

Use of Social Security Numbers in Certification of Emergency Medical Services Personnel Under AS 18.08

Introduction and Overview: The Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, 5 U.S.C. § 552a (1994) prohibits a federal, state or local government from denying an individual any right, benefit or privilege provided by law because of the individual's refusal to disclose his Social Security numbers (SSN). This section does not apply to any disclosure which is required by federal statute. The law further requires agencies collecting Social Security numbers to provide information about how the information will be used. This document provides information about the collection and use of Social Security numbers by the Section of Community Health and EMS (CHEMS) of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services for the purposes of certifying individuals under Alaska Statute 18.08.010 —18.08.090.

Under What Authority Does CHEMS Collect SSNs? Federal and state laws regarding child support enforcement and federal debt collection require state agencies to deny licenses to those who are significantly delinquent in paying their child support or student loan obligations. (See Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 - 42 USC 666(a)(13); Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 - 31 USC 7701(c) for more information).

Child Support. AS 25.27.244 (a) (Adverse Action Against Delinquent Obligor's Occupational License), requires the Child Support Enforcement Agency to provide a list of delinquent obligors to CHEMS each month and CHEMS must take action to withhold the occupational license of each identified delinquent obligor. The definition of "license" includes authorization under AS 18.08 to perform emergency medical services. AS 25.27.244(s)(2)(A)(iv).

Under AS 18.08.082, the department certifies emergency medical technicians, defibrillator technicians, emergency medical technician instructors, emergency trauma technician instructors, mobile intensive care paramedic course coordinators and emergency medical dispatchers. AS 18.05.030 compels the department to cooperate with the federal government and provide information it requires.

Student Loans. AS 14.43.148(a) (Nonrenewal of License) prohibits CHEMS from the renewing the license of a person who is in default on a loan made by the Commission on Postsecondary Education once it has received notice from the Commission that the individual is in default. AS 14.43.148 (h)(1)(A) (iv) defines "license" to include authorization under AS 18.08 to perform emergency medical services.

How the SSN is Used? To comply with federal and state laws, we use our certification data to confirm if licensees are in default of their child support and postsecondary education loans, based on the lists of defaulted obligors which are provided to CHEMS. CHEMS may provide limited certification data to the other agencies to clarify an ambiguous entry on the lists. In addition, the SSN is used within the EMS Test Correction system to match test scores electronically with certification records. SSNs are not used for other purposes and are not displayed on certification materials. Adverse actions against health care providers, e.g. revocation of certification, are required to be reported to the federal government. The provider's SSN will be reported as part of this required report.

Is Providing Your SSN Mandatory? Yes, for the reasons cited above, we are required to collect SSNs. Applications on which the SSN is not provided will be considered incomplete. The application will not be processed and no certificate will be issued until the SSN is provided. It should be noted that Social Security numbers can be assigned, by the Social Security Administration, to foreign workers who are authorized to work in the United States.

Summary: In order to become certified to provide emergency medical services under AS 18.08, a person must disclose their Social Security number. The Section of Community Health and EMS uses the number for purposes required by statute and internally to match test scores with certification records. SSNs are not disclosed except as required by law and efforts are made to maintain the security and privacy of personal information.

This document is maintained on the web site of the Section of Community Health and EMS.

Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Health
Section of Community Health and EMS
Box 110616
Juneau, AK 99811-0616
907-465-3027
907-465-4101 (fax)
<http://www.chems.alaska.gov>